



SEPAC Best Practices during COVID-19 School Closures – April 2020

Advisory Role:

- SEPACS should be documenting the issues raised by families in their school district, as well as things that are working well. Explore ways to advise your school committee through remote means
- SEPACs should try to “meet” with school district administrators on a regular basis to advise them of issues facing families, keep up regular contact and ask how the SEPAC can be of assistance
- SEPACs should use their communication channels (emails, Facebook) to give weekly updates on activities

Meetings:

SEPACs can meet remotely – (using zoom, got to webinar or other platforms)

[Executive Order on the Open Meeting Law and COVID-19](#)

- Meeting notice posted 48 hours in advance must include specific information on how the public may access a meeting that is being held remotely
- All members of a public body participating remotely must be clearly audible to each other; text or online chat is not an acceptable method of remote participation
- The public body chair must identify all public body members participating remotely, and all votes taken during the meeting must be conducted by roll call vote. Minutes should be made available upon request

Communication:

- Email – use public and social media to ask families to share an email address with the SEPAC so they can get notices and information
- Facebook group/page – ask families and community leaders to “like” your group/page
- Website – update your own website frequently or link to important websites. It may not be possible to update your SEPAC page on a school district website due to all of the pressing IT needs during this time
- Parent Support Groups – host Parent Support Groups or virtual “coffee hours” to enable parents to connect in a non-public forum. Groups can be organized around a specific grade level or topic

FCSN’s Advice for Families on Remote Learning:

School districts must provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities, yet “... during this national emergency, schools may not be able to provide all services in the same manner they are typically provided.” (US DOE, March 21, 2020)

- Contact your special education liaison if they have not contacted you, set up regular/weekly communication
- Talk with your special education liaison about your child’s special education services plan
- Accept the services; no need to consent, but you may have to sign a release of online procedures/rules
- Document the way your child is accessing services – keep a record/take notes! (see template below)
- Talk with your school about what is working and what is not working
- Let school know of any problems ASAP: technology, lack of understanding of parent role, working parent etc.
- Encourage all families to engage with SEPAC
- Adjust expectations, find patience and look to collaborate, this is new for everyone and will look differently

[Student Remote Learning Record](#) – weekly template for families to record special education services

TIP: Try and make it work as best you can. Do not to allow the inability to replicate with perfection get in the way

Stay Connected to the Federation, we are here to help! If you have Questions or Concerns:

Call FCSN: 617-236-7210 or 800-331-0688 and/or Family TIES: 800-905-8437

Email: info@fcsn.org

Online Intake Form: <https://fcsn.org/ptic/call-center/call-center-intake-form/>